C T I A NEWSLETTER

COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ASSASSINATIONS
1520 16th Street, N.W., Suite 101
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 232-1152

Fall, 1973

This Newsletter has been long overdue and for that we apologize and make no excuses.

Our Committee had its latest Board of Directors meeting in Washington on August 15th and at that time a number of decisions were made. Probably the one of greatest interest was the ratification of plans for a two day Conference on November 23rd and 24th. The Conference will be held at Georgetown University and presented jointly by our Committee and the University. Although the affair comes on the 10th Anniversary of JFK's murder, the Conference will also cover the RFK, King, and Wallace shootings. We expect to attract as speakers and panelists a large number of experts representing diverse views on the several cases. Among other things we expect to have special discussions on the following subjects: medical evidence, physical evidence, new investigative techniques, legal aspects, conspiracy theories generally, and new books and movies.

As the number of those who can attend the Conference is limited by the size of the auditorium, admission will be by registration on a first come, first served basis. If you wish to assure yourself of admittance, there is enclosed a registration blank for your convenience. The arrangements for the Conference are being made by Ms. Andrea Wyatt. Questions can be addressed to her c/o CTIA, 1520 16th Street, N.W., Suite 101, Washington, D. C. 20036.

The Committee is also trying to arrange for the production of a documentary film which would be, in effect, a critique of Dallas, ten years later. We are unfortunately running into problems of both finance and film rights. The movie project is in the hands of a young New Yorker, Bob Galdston, who is a musician and record producer.

After four years at 927 15th Street, N.W., the office of the Committee is being moved to 1520 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036, after September 15th. At the new location we will have somewhat more office space and a generally more convenient set-up.

As for the past several years, the Committee is generally being run by its Director of Research, Bob Smith, and its Counsel, Jim Lesar. Our deepest thanks go to both of these veterans for their unselfish and unstinting devotion to "the cause." Hopefully, they will stay with us until one or more of the cases are broken open and the final solutions can be turned over to the Government.

The status of the cases is complex, and we can only touch on them briefly in this Newsletter.

J.F.K.

Considerable progress has been made in piecing together the complex pieces of the puzzle. However, after ten years we still do not have anything resembling a "signed confession," which seems to be what's needed to arouse public and/or Congressional interest.

Much work has been done on Oswald's trip to Mexico by Messrs. Smith, Popkin, and Fensterwald; however, no publication of the data and its conclusions is in sight. Dr. Cyril Wecht has completed and published his first review of the autopsy material (see Modern Medicine, November 27, 1972, pp. 28 - 32.)

A number of unusually interesting statements on Dallas have been released recently: a statement by LBJ, quoted by Leo Janos in Atlantic for July, 1973, to the effect that LBJ never believed that Oswald was a lone killer; a recent CBS First Line Report by Dan Rather, casting grave doubts on the Warren Report. Copies of excerpts from these are attached.

In his news conference on August 22, 1973, President Nixon made the following remark:

"Q. Mr. President, you recently suggested that if the late Robert Kennedy had initiated 10 more wiretaps, he would have been able to discover the Oswald plan, as you described it, and thereby presumably prevent the assassination of President Kennedy."

"A. Let me correct you, sir. I want to be sure that the assumption is correct. I said if 10 more wiretaps could have found the conspiracy . . . uh, if it was a conspiracy, or the individual, then it would have been worth it."

The President's uncertainty on the matter has not been further elaborated.

Another recent development appeared in the July issue of Penthouse Magazine. Writer George O'Toole, applying a new type of purported lie detection device (PSE) to the recorded statements of various Warren Commission witnesses, has found what he believes to be a pattern of deception consistent with the view that Oswald was framed. O'Toole has since carried his research much further and will report his findings in a book which will be published late this year or early in 1974.

A movie has been made out of Mark Lane's and Don Freed's book Executive Action, starring Burt Lancaster and Robert Ryan. The flick is part fact and part fiction. It is due for release in November; possibly its premier will be held in Washington on November 22nd, though its producers are hoping to have it open in Dallas.

R.F.K.

Sirhan Sirhan has acquired a new lawyer, Roger Hanson, of Los Angeles. Hanson has achieved considerable recognition for his efforts to re-open the infamous Kirschke Case. He believes that if he is successful in that case (and we believe he will be), then he can get a new trial for Sirhan. He would have at least three major things going for him:

a) The new position of Sirhan's original lawyer, Grant Cooper, who now says "had he known then what he knows now, the trial would have been vastly different."

b) Coroner Noguchi's insistence that all three shots hitting RFK came from behind and below and at a maximum range of six inches; whereas, the witnesses generally place Sirhan in front of RFK and several feet away.

c) Studies made by criminalist William W. Harper, showing that the ballistics evidence submitted at the trial was insufficient to establish that the fatal bullets came from Sirhan's gun.

Martin Luther King

The convicted slayer of Dr. King, James Earl Ray, is being held in solitary confinement indefinitely in the State Prison in Nashville, Tennessee. After two complete trips through the Tennessee Courts to the State Supreme Court (without success), Ray filed a writ of habeas corpus with the Federal District Court in Nashville. The writ alleged that his guilty plea was involuntary, that he wished to withdraw it and stand trial. In August, 1973, Federal Judge H. Clure Morton turned down the writ, even denying Ray the usual evidentiary hearing to ascertain whether in fact his guilty plea was voluntary or involuntary. The case is now on appeal to the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal in Cincinnati. No decision is expected there before 1974. Meanwhile, Ray remains in solitary confinement ("for his own good") despite all efforts to get relief for him.

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Along with almost everything else, the Watergate has affected the several assassination investigations. Its general effect has cut two ways: People are less inclined to believe what the government tells them and more inclined to believe that "the government is capable of almost anything;" conversely it has turned off millions of Americans with respect to politics in any way, shape, or form; this in turn, means less interest in solving political murders.

There are also particular Watergate effects. For example, E. Howard Hunt's new book on the Bay of Pigs emphasizes the zeal with which the author advocated Castro's assassination coincidentally with the 1961 invasion. The name Frank Sturgis (or Frank Fiorini, etc.) rings a familiar bell; Sturgis apparently once claimed that he had encountered Oswald in Miami, stimulating an investigation by the FBI which produced three lengthy documents in the Warren Commission's files. And then there is Arthur Bremer; many people wonder whether he was financed and directed at an early stage of his career by any White House "agents."

Even Chappaquiddick has drawn the attention of Ervin and Cox, and a lawsuit has been filed against the "plumbers" by one of Mary Jo Kopechne's roommates. And so on.

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The Committee is still basically unfunded. We have enough for rent, telephone and postage, but that's about all. If any of you can spare a few dollars you can be assured that they will be put to good use. Four contribution blanks are enclosed; please distribute them to interested persons. If you can spare more than a few dollars, we might even be able to afford to hire a trained investigator to follow some of the myriad leads smoldering away in our files.

We hope to see you in November.

Bud Fensterwald

Bernard Fensterwald, Jr.
Executive Director

From "The Last Days of the President" by Leo Janos, The Atlantic, July, 1973:

> During coffee, the talk turned to President Kennedy, and Johnson expressed his belief that the assassination in Dallas had been part of a conspiracy. "I never believed that Oswald acted alone, although I can accept that he pulled the trigger." Johnson said that when he had taken office he found that "we had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean." A year or so before Kennedy's death, a CIA-backed assassination team had been picked up in Havana. Johnson speculated that Dallas had been a retaliation for this thwarted attempt, although he couldn't prove it. "After the Warren Commission reported in, I asked Ramsey Clark [then Attorney General] to quietly look into the whole thing. Only two weeks later he reported back that he couldn't find anything new."

(Upon inquiry, Ramsey Clark has denied that any such request was made of him, pointing out that he did not become Attorney General until 1966 whereas the Warren Report was published in September, 1964. Nicholas Katzenbach was Attorney General from 1964 to 1966, succeeding Robert Kennedy. It is not clear from the remarks attributed to LBJ whether the request was made immediately after the Warren Report was issued or some years later.)

* * * * *

"Rethinking the Unthinkable" - Dan Rather, CBS News First Line Report, August 10, 1973:

Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who shot President Kennedy: Did he ever know or have contact with E. Howard Hunt or Gordon Liddy or any of the others in that mysterious and dangerous crew convicted in the Watergate crime - and under investigation still in connection with

a series of other criminal acts including burglarizing homes, offices, and embassies? What about Sirhan Sirhan, the assassin of Robert Kennedy, and James Earl Ray, the killer of Martin Luther King, and Arthur Bremer, the man who shot George Wallace? Did Hunt or Liddy or his strange Cuban contacts, did any or all of them know any of these people? If so, how and how well? Under normal circumstances, and in more normal times, these questions would not be asked. Unfortunately for us all, circumstances are far from normal. These are not normal times. Among people on the street, among people far removed from the elite strata of politics and with no stake or ambition in partisan political machinations, the questions are there, wandering the backroads of their minds. Especially about the assassination of President Kennedy. Doubts long have nagged. The Warren Commission concluded on the basis of evidence and testimony available at the time that Oswald and probably Oswald alone fired at President Kennedy. No conspiracy was the conclusion. Please pardon the personal reference, but it seems advisable in this instance to note that this reporter was in Dallas when Kennedy was shot, followed closely the Warren investigation, and conducted for CBS News and with CBS News' full resources an independent investigation. Then and ever since, this reporter had defended the Warren Commission and its conclusions. However, it occurred at the time, to this

reporter and to others, that the Warren Commission may have made a mistake in closing completely its investigation. The question was asked then, why could not the investigation be open-ended? Why could not at least a skeleton investigatory staff be left? It was, admittedly by all concerned, a close decision, but President Johnson, Chief Justice Warren and the Kennedy family all decided that it was best for the country and for the case to end the Warren Commission, its investigation and its reporting. We know now but didn't know then that President Johnson was never finally, absolutely convinced that Oswald acted completely alone. Mr. Johnson apparently wasn't because his friend John Connally, also wounded in the shooting of President Kennedy, said he wasn't absolutely convinced. Now the old sores, the old doubts, the old questions and some new ones are being reopened: Oswald's involvement with anti-Castro Cubans; what was supposed to have been his mystery appearance in Mexico City; the possibility of contacts with people who had CIA connections; Hunt and Liddy's involvement with anti-Castro Cubans; their CIA connections. These, so far as we know, are just a smattering of the kaleidoscope of unrelated coincidences, unproved allegations, and downright rumors that sweep through and boggle the minds of people who try to think straight about what has happened. No right thinking person wants to be irresponsible. That is part of the reason people who think about it might talk about it little.

Another part of the reason is fear -- fear of opening further all those old doubts and suspicions. But fear of the truth is not an American trait. Perhaps it isn't time to re-open the case of the Kennedy assassination, or any of the others in any formal way. It may be, however, that someone, somewhere in authority already is asking quietly, investigatively, some of the tough questions about characters such as Hunt and Liddy and their Cuban contacts and whether they had at any time any connection with Oswald, Sirhan, Ray, or Bremer.

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1520 16th Street, N.W., Suite 101
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Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find $15 for one reservation (or $___ for ____ reservations) for your Conference at Georgetown University in Washington on November 23rd and 24th, 1973.

It is my understanding that ____ place(s) will be reserved for me and held at the door and that the program of the Conference will be sent to me well in advance of that date.

Name _____

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